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ABSTRACT

A new conceptual framework for further education has been developed as part of the reforms currently being undertaken by Australia's Adult, Community, and Further Education Board. Four key principles underpin the curriculum framework: multiplicity, connectedness, critical intelligence, and transformation. According to the framework, educational practices are central to realizing the lifelong learning goals and further education values embedded in the four principles. The framework is based on a definition of "outcomes" that includes knowledge and understanding along with behavior and skills, and it was developed with consideration for key political and economic, scientific and technological, cultural, justice, work, governance, demographic, and regional issues currently facing Australia. The curriculum design model has been characterized as follows: a "package deal" that fuses frequently isolated curriculum aspects (practices, outcomes, recognition, and pathways) to create an integrated, rich learning experience; a model that is open, inclusive, and enduring, as well as responsive and dynamic; a "devolution of power" model that affirms the central significance of teachers, learners, and coordinators in localizing and negotiating learning to achieve tailored, good-quality learning outcomes; and a model incorporating lifelong learning. (Appended are a list of factors influencing the frameworks evolution and acknowledgments. Contains 97 references.) (MN)

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Adult, Community and
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Transforming Lives

Conceptual Framework for Further Education Curriculum

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Transforming Lives, Transforming Communities

Conceptual Framework for Further Education Curriculum

A framework prepared for the
Adult, Community and Further Education Board
by Delia Bradshaw.

A curriculum is a design for the future. That is its most crucial characteristic, among many others. A curriculum provides, even if entirely implicitly, the knowledges, the principles, and the modes of thinking, the possibilities of action which form the stuff with which, around which, and out of which people can, if they wish, make themselves as social subjects. A curriculum projects a vision of the future, and it is that aspect which forms the basis for the examination of present curricula, and of any changes and reforms which are proposed.

Gunther Kress, **Writing the Future**

... a way to open new conversations on Australia's past, Australia's diversity and Australia's future ... In short, a watershed - a turning point - in Australian history. ... a moment when our nation is on the brink of potentially liberating social change ... (to) take a new direction and build a new future ... in itself, an act of cultural and political imagination.

Peter Kell, 'Watershed: A Conversation for Community Leadership' in **Education Australia**

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Transforming Lives, Transforming Communities:
Conceptual Framework for Further Education Curriculum

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INTRODUCTION

Preamble

Background

This further education curriculum framework is one part of the reforms which the Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board is undertaking in the areas of further education curriculum and registration/recognition arrangements for community based providers. These two areas are interlinked and together will provide the coherence and flexibility which will enable local responses to learning needs.

The need to diversify opportunities for lifelong learning and strengthen the responsiveness of Adult Community Education (ACE) to learners is driving the Board's reforms. By providing a coherent and visionary approach to further education, the Board hopes to achieve:

- enhanced quality of education through clearer educational objectives;
- support for local diversity of provision within a widely accepted and well understood framework;
- reliable, well understood, locally relevant and well respected pathways for students to paid and voluntary work, post secondary qualifications, civic involvement, and personal development;
- greater capacity to draw on the best of further education curriculum development initiatives from across Australia and
- a more focussed effort to improve professional development for further education teachers.

The national reforms to training recognition open the way for educational organisations to develop and accredit courses. The ACFE Board is aware that these reforms can further empower educational organisations to flexibly meet individual learning needs, if courses are set into a framework which gives expression to the aims and objectives of further education.

The project methodology for this framework included a wide ranging literature search; a discussion paper summarising the critical issues that emerged from this search; a series of consultative workshops to discuss these issues and consultations with individuals familiar with allied or related frameworks, such as the Certificates in General Education for Adults (CGEA), the National Reporting System (NRS) and the Key Competencies. The good practice evident in recent local further education curriculum initiatives provided key reference points.

A Concept Map

This framework for further education curriculum can be thought of as a concept map for navigating the complex terrain of 'further education' curriculum in all its scope and variety. Learners, teachers, providers, administrators, policymakers and the ACFE Board can use it as a guide for considering further education curriculum.

This conceptual framework is a fusion of the many threads that typify the wide-ranging, future-focussed adult education debates occurring around the world today. It synthesises the most compelling of these key ideas, offering an opportunity for thinking a-new about the future of further education curriculum in Victoria, an opportunity for extending current further education values and practices.

Infusing this curriculum framework is a vision that further education makes a significant contribution towards the creation of personal and social futures. The name 'Transforming Lives, Transforming Communities' encapsulates these powerful possibilities.

This further education curriculum framework attempts to blend the best of the old and the best of the new. It does not replace the good models and practices that exist, but rather joins and extends and strengthens them. It does not cover ground already covered or being revisited by other projects, for example the realms of language, literacy, numeracy or key competencies. Instead, these are set in a bigger picture. Nor does this curriculum framework attempt to construct a fixed, uniform, overarching superstructure of 'further education competency standards'. Such a task was deemed not only impossible, given the multitude of courses and subject areas that call themselves 'further education', but also undesirable. Diversity in this framework is favoured over uniformity.

Curriculum

The term 'curriculum' can be interpreted narrowly or broadly. The definition of 'curriculum' that frames this curriculum framework was used by the Vocational Education and Training Curriculum Board:

Curriculum goes beyond course specification to embrace the wider organised learning experience ... The learning needs of each individual student should be considered in terms not just of the choice of modules but of activities, materials, delivery modes and teaching styles [which ensure] a set of responsive learning experiences in accordance with the needs of each individual learner.

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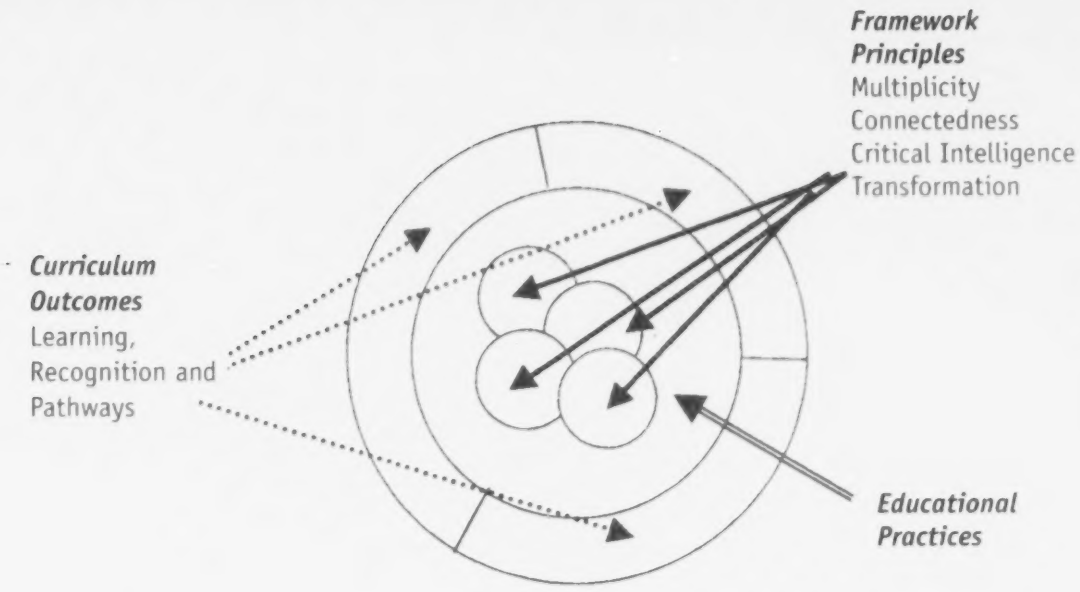

Diagram 1: Further Education Principles, Practices and Outcomes

This framework is a way of identifying what constitutes *'the wider organised learning experience'*. It realises this in three distinctive ways.

Curriculum Framework Principles

First, it specifies four principles as a way of naming and evaluating further education curriculum. These principles are *Multiplicity; Connectedness; Critical Intelligence* and *Transformation*. They sit at the heart of the framework and were derived from a consideration of the lifelong learning goals esteemed by adult educators all around the world.

Educational Practices

Second, it stresses the centrality of Educational Practices in realising the lifelong learning goals and further education values embedded in the four key principles. It affirms the pivotal role of further education practitioners in achieving quality further education.

Curriculum Outcomes

Third, it provides a richly textured definition of 'outcomes'. It combines Pathway Outcomes and Recognition Outcomes with the more customary Learning Outcomes. It also expands 'learning outcomes' to include knowledge and understanding as well as behaviour and skills.

Diagram 1 above illustrates how the framework principles generate the educational practices which, in turn, enable the desired curriculum outcomes.

The context

As a prelude, it is necessary to locate the framework in its historical, philosophical and political context. This will be followed by a summary of some of the main influences and debates shaping all contemporary educational thinking and practice. It is these which contributed to the vision and values informing the framework and to the key organising ideas as expressed in the four framework principles.

What is 'further education'?

Many views

'Further education' means many things to many people. This diversity of meanings, if not clarified, can cause confusion.

- One view is that there is no distinction between 'adult education', 'adult community education', 'lifelong learning' and 'further education': the terms can be used synonymously and interchangeably, a shorthand way of referring to an approach to education rather than to subject content or program focus.

Others see 'further education' as one amongst many manifestations of adult education, others being 'community education' or 'vocational education'. In this second view, 'further education' is the area that provides the basic educational foundations necessary for employment, retraining, further study, citizenship and

others forms of social participation. This second definition encompasses those aspects of adult education that set learners on a pathway that moves them from one achievement to the next possibility.

Still others hold a third position saying that, strictly speaking, as defined in the Adult, Community and Further Education Act 1991, 'further education' refers to English as a second language programs, adult literacy and basic education programs, general preparatory programs which prepare students for further education and training, and adult VCE programs. For planning purposes, these programs are classified as Stream 2000.

Definition used for this curriculum framework

Considering these three interpretations, it can be seen that the first two meanings envisage further education (usually written in lower case) as primarily being about an embodiment of educational philosophies, educational values and educational pedagogies, an ethos dedicated to wholistic and transformative education. The third meaning, on the other hand, sees Further Education (usually written in Upper Case) as a description of bureaucratic and systemic arrangements and boundaries, a categorisation determining program funding and allied matters.

A potential for misunderstanding is resolved by distinguishing between further education (lower case) as an ethos and Further Education (Upper Case) as an institutional definition of program types. There is a place for both understandings, as long as the meaning intended is made clear. 'Further education' as an ethos could encompass programs and educational areas beyond those constituting the legal definition of Stream 2000. Indeed, many would argue that further education as an ethos could (and many would say should) inform vocational training and general adult education as well as Stream 2000 Further Education courses. This broader definition, therefore, offers the possibility of breaking down artificial boundaries, of rethinking the interface between adult, community and further education (ACFE) and vocational education and training (VET).

For the purposes of this project, 'further education' is taken to mean adult education that is infused with a further education perspective. It is education that gives priority to foundations, preparedness and pathways, expanding individuals' capacities and choices in ways that meet their needs. At present, such courses are defined as Stream 2000.

The (International) Commission (on Education for the Twenty-first Century) does not see education as a miracle cure or a magic formula opening the door to a world in which ideals will be attained, but as one of the principal means available to foster a deeper and more harmonious form of human development and thereby to reduce poverty, exclusion, ignorance, oppression and war.

p.11 'Education: the necessary Utopia' in **Learning: The Treasure Within - Highlights**

The same complaint is voiced with almost monotonous regularity: 'Of course, we're going to need technology and the related know-how, professionalism and expertise in the future. But the initial requirement is for adaptability and flexibility, the ability to discard outmoded routines, creativity, the capacity for acquiring new knowledge, a holistic approach and concern for the total entity, a comprehensive view, an awareness of the importance of the environment and management of resources, both locally and globally, precision and a sense of quality, communication skills, a spirit of co-operation, mutual understanding ranging from the smallest group to large international bodies, the ability to distinguish between the essential and the non-essential, the ability to come to terms with a problem and solve it along with others, willpower and the ability to make decisions and assume responsibility for the consequences of those decisions ...' These requirements crop up again and again in corporate strategies and in theories.

p.18 **The Golden Riches in the Grass: Lifelong learning for all**

The Committee considers that the time is ripe to rethink the national policy framework under which the ACE and VET sectors operate, and to orient that policy clearly towards the development of what has been called 'a learning society'.

p.19 Overview, **Beyond Cinderella: Towards a learning society**

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What are the main shaping influences and debates that this curriculum framework needs to consider?

Global and local shaping influences

This educational framework takes account of the world as it is now, as it has been and how it might be. Political, economic, scientific, technological and cultural forces, and the ethical choices they present and represent, inevitably shape all educational activity.

In reviewing the literature, the main issues facing ***the whole globe*** highlighted in all the publications are:

Political and Economic issues

- the internationalisation of trade and the economy
- the new international order
- the movements of peoples
- the persistence of gender disparity
- the persistence of oppressive regimes and ideologies

Scientific and Technological Issues

- the application of communications technology to most areas of activity
- the relentless march of science and technology
- the ecological imperatives

Cultural Issues

- a society selling choice and options
- the growing sense of risk, uncertainty, confusion, loneliness and alienation in a world of conflicting meanings and competing choices
- the dominance of the mass media and its impact on culture
- the uncertainties related to the nature and type of work
- the social and cultural changes in traditions and assumptions related to gender roles, family life and ethics.

For Australia, there are important ***local issues*** as well. These include:

Justice Issues

- reconciliation with Australia's indigenous people

Work issues

- changing work distribution and occupations
- unemployment and under-employment
- the increased feminisation of the labour force

Governance Issues

- potential constitutional change
- the reconfiguration of public and private sectors
- government policies seeking to outsource service delivery

Demographic issues

- the changing age structure of the workforce
- the ageing of Australia's population
- the diversity of Australia's cultural composition
- the drift from rural to urban centres
- the shifts in regional patterns of socio-economic hardship

Regional Issues

- the shift of focus in trade from Europe to Asia.

These macro and micro changes have markedly shaped, and continue to shape, debates in education and training. They reconfigure and recontextualise long-standing traditions concerned with education and knowledge. They foreground particular questions about education for close scrutiny.

Major educational debates

All the literature surveyed stresses the central role to be played by learning as we move towards, and into, the twenty-first century. 'Lifelong learning' is on everyone's lips. All the discussions and debates about the vital role to be played by further education point to the need for political commitment to this ideal. How well societies and governments respond to the challenge of 'lifelong learning', the literature makes clear, hinges on how they answer the following questions.

Humans as learners

Empty vessels or active participants?
Compliant consumers or contributing citizens?

Models of knowledge and learning

Individualistic or socially situated?
Integration of technical, conceptual and critical knowledge or provision of unproblematic facts and information?
Low-road or high-road transferability?

Educational practices

Situated learning or decontextualised instruction?
Consultative or prescriptive, unilateral or democratic processes?
Instrumentalist or multipurpose approaches?
The relationship between global and local: one way or two way?
The place of technology and multimedia: dominant or complementary?

Whilst none of the texts examined dispute the centrality of learning and its role in determining how individuals

will live and how societies will evolve, the authors differ in their beliefs about the learner, about knowledge and about power relations in society. That is, they differ in the way they respond to and act on the questions posed above. Some equate 'lifelong learning' with user-pays vocational training, accepting it as obligatory in today's competitive world. Others understand 'lifelong learning' to mean learning for all aspects of life, perceiving further education and vocational education to be mutually interdependent and a joint responsibility of government, the local community and the individual.

Such different interpretations highlight the importance of any educational initiative being explicit about its educational purposes and practices, about the outcomes and pathways encouraged, that is, about its own frameworks. It is time to spell out the assumptions and values about learners, about learning and about broader social goods that are inherent in this conceptual framework for further education curriculum.

What vision and values are embodied in this curriculum framework?

Vision

As a carrier of values, a framework can be seen as a design for the future, as a vision of what is highly desirable in society and in its citizens. As the author of **Education for the 21stCentury: Asia-Pacific Perspectives** said so eloquently: "*The future is not some place we are going to, **it is one we are creating.***" (p.7)

The vision infusing this framework is premised on the belief that further education can make a significant contribution towards the creation of the future, towards personal and social transformation, towards community building. It is a vision of society that advocates a peaceful, prosperous and healthy future for all on the globe.

It embodies the longstanding beliefs and traditions of adult, community and further education, a field that has always promoted the values of agency through collective negotiation and reconciliation.

Values

The vision implicit in this framework calls for multidimensional further education purposes and outcomes that incorporate the following educational values:

- the transformative and productive potential of knowing and meeting the needs of the locale, be that community, enterprise or workplace;

> ***... the Committee continues to affirm the value of a concept of education and training which is inclusive and which addresses multiple needs ... employees are not just 'hands'. Adult educators have always approached their task holistically, placing learners at the centre of their attention, with an integrated view of their cognitive, technical and personal development. This is the traditional ACE model and, in the Committee's view, all vocational preparation should embody these precepts.***
>
> p.5 **Beyond Cinderella: Towards a learning society**

> ***In education, these modes of human apprehension - intuition, ethical thinking, aesthetic perceptions - are the very substance of educational action if education is to be anything more than a mechanical exercise in conditioning. ... Integration will be the new paradigm.***
>
> p.15 **Education for the 21st Century: Asia-Pacific Perspectives**

> *It has been argued that the educational requirements for the future are international understanding, linguistic skills, the ability to interpret symbols, a spirit of co-operation and participation, flexibility, a holistic approach, the ability to use both sides of the brain, openness and the motivation to seek constant development and learning. These qualities are not technical. Nor even academic. They are human. ... Tomorrow's adult learning must unite intellect and feelings, progress and caring, vision and substance, the ring and the arrow, fusing them together to form a creative spiral.*
>
> p.8 **The Golden Riches in the Grass: Lifelong learning for all**

> *... becoming **a learning society is a public and political process ... it is about recreating our democracy within and as part of the 21st world ...***
>
> p.301 **'Metaphors of Learning' in Adults Learning**

- the powerful socio-economic benefits of integrating personal, social, cultural, vocational, economic and political perspectives and achievements into all education and learning;
- the empowering strength of fusing knowledge, understanding and skills; and
- the generative possibilities that result from negotiation and reconciliation, in particular, from negotiating complexity, difference and paradox.

By enacting these values, this framework fulfils the values of the Adult, Community and Further Education Board which state that Adult Community Education (ACE):

- is learner-centred
- has education at its core
- is community based and driven
- values and promotes diversity
- is adaptive and responsive.

From the literature, it is clear that particular *lifelong learning goals* realise this vision and these values. These are outlined next.

KEY ORGANISING IDEAS OF THE FRAMEWORK

The goals shaping this further education curriculum framework reflect the key ideas identified in a wide-ranging literature search. Through all the writings consulted, a cluster of lifelong learning goals were commended again and again as the ones that would make a significant contribution towards living meaningfully in today's world. These goals refer to all aspects of living, not only to working life; they incorporate understanding, knowledge and ethics as well as observable behaviour, skills and performance.

One compelling example from the literature is the Delors report, **Learning: The Treasure Within**, a report prepared for UNESCO that is the result of a worldwide process of consultation and analysis over a period of three years. This report asserts that learning throughout life is based on four pillars – learning to know; learning to do; learning to live with others and learning to be. The lifelong learning goals listed below - a distillation of the goals most commonly highlighted and most vigorously promoted by adult educators from all around the world - expand the four Delors report goals into fuller statements on knowing, doing, co-operating and being.

Lifelong learning goals

The lifelong learning goals advocated by this framework are to:

- understand complex systems which interact unpredictably;
- identify and integrate existing and emerging personal, local, national and global perspectives;
- prosper with difference, paradox and multiple sets of realities;
- see and make connections between the past, the present and the future;
- encourage sustainability in relationships and the environment;
- re-invent the self, privately and publicly, civically and occupationally, throughout life;
- extend learning styles and repertoires; and
- develop insights through questioning, through asking 'why?' and 'what if?' as well as 'what?' and 'how?'

... If it is to secure its place and future in the world, Europe has to place at least as much emphasis on the personal fulfilment of its citizens, men and women alike, as it has up to now placed on economic and monetary issues (p.11) ... The White Paper takes the view that the three essential requirements of social integration, the enhancement of employability and personal fulfilment, are not incompatible. They should not be brought into conflict but on the contrary should be closely linked (p.18).

Teaching and Learning: Towards the learning society

As people are simultaneously members of multiple lifeworlds, so their identities have multiple layers that are in complex relation to each other. No person is a member of a single community. Rather they are members of multiple and overlapping communities - communities of work, interest, affiliation, ethnicity, sexual identity, etc ... As lifeworlds become more divergent and their boundaries more blurred, the central fact of language becomes the multiplicity of meanings and their continual intersection. Just as there are multiple layers to everyone's identity, there are multiple discourses of identity and multiple discourses of recognition to be negotiated ... we have to be proficient as we negotiate the many lifeworlds each of us inhabits, and the many lifeworlds we encounter in our everyday lives ...

p.71 'A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures' in Harvard Educational Review

In the best (education) *the focus is on judgment and interpretation ...to get behind the data, to ask why certain facts have been selected, why they are assumed to be important, how they were deduced, and how they might be contradicted ...* (the participant) *learns to examine reality from many angles, in different lights, and thus to visualise new possibilities and choices ... Most formal education perpetuates this compartmental fallacy ... This may be an efficient system for conveying bits of data, but not for instilling wisdom.*

pp. 230-1 The Work of Nations

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Four key principles

A close inspection of these goals reveals a number of recurrent patterns or themes. Four recurring concepts — ***multiplicity, connectedness, critical intelligence*** and ***transformation*** — offer a succinct and cogent way of synthesising and symbolising both the spirit and the substance of these lifelong learning goals. In this role, these four concepts become powerful principles, **principles capable of embodying the goals and values of this curriculum framework** in a coherent and concentrated way.

This further education curriculum framework advocates that each of these principles be present and visible in every aspect of quality further education, in the educational practices, the learning outcomes, the recognition arrangements and pathway planning. As well as a guide to curriculum design, these four principles can be considered as principles for program design, whatever the locale, context or setting.

For analytical purposes, the four principles are presented separately. In practice, each principle co-exists, to a greater or lesser degree, within each of the other three all of the time. Any one principle is always inhabited by the others, all constantly energising and refiguring each other in new and dynamic ways. A brief sketch of each principle follows.

Multiplicity/Complexity/Difference/Diversity

Multiplicity is about a broad and deep educational reach. This principle embraces the complexity and paradoxes of social and material life. In it are embedded the ideals of living creatively with cultural diversity, with the multifaceted nature of change. This concept points to the need to recognise multiple personal and social roles, identities and allegiances. Multiplicity in education is about contributing simultaneously to individual fulfilment, material sufficiency, cultural belongingness, social justice, national wealth and global citizenship. It is education that is:

- multipurpose in aim
- multidimensional in approach and content
- multifaceted in methodology and
- multiform in outcomes.

It encompasses multiculturalism, multilingualism, multimedia and multiliteracies.

Connectedness/Inter-relationships

Connectedness in education is about dissolving false boundaries and harmonising apparent opposites. Connectedness is about connecting the personal and the political, the emotional and the rational, the physical and the spiritual, the cognitive and the ethical, knowledge and action. This principle is about navigating pathways through contradictions and inconsistencies. This ideal relates past, present and future to each other. Connectedness is about relationships and reconciliation.

Critical, practical, reflective intelligence

This principle is about recognising the many domains of human intelligence and knowledge, and the importance of all aspects fusing and reinforcing each other. Critical, practical, reflective intelligence in education assumes a multifaceted definition of intelligence, favouring the development of intelligences such as intuitive intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, spatial intelligence, symbolic intelligence and physical intelligence as well as factual, analytical and linguistic intelligences. This principle expands perspectives and discursive repertoires. The capacity for reflection and self-knowledge is encouraged. Fundamental concepts are knowing how to learn and developing the habit of questioning. Critical analysis involves the cycle of framing focussed questions, acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills to research these questions, making value judgments and taking justifiable action. Critical, practical, reflective intelligence means being clear and explicit about the values embedded in decisions.

Transformation

Transformation in education is about agency, about developing a confidence and a capacity for effective action. Transformation is about participating in a variety of learning networks - educational institutions, workplaces, community agencies, affiliation groups and social movements. This principle means developing a consciousness of the changes associated with learning, understanding the connections between personal transformation and the larger transformations of social and cultural change. This ideal favours community building and active citizenship in all settings: in the local community, as a global citizen, in cyberspace.

FURTHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM DESIGN MODEL

Four as one

All of the above influences — the readings, the educational debates and the lifelong learning goals that shape the principles informing this framework — signal the need for a multidimensional and integrated further education curriculum design model, one that prizes critical reflection and meaningful participation. Such is the intention of the following four-in-one model. This model coherently assembles four key aspects of further education teaching and learning. They are the aspects most often noted, by further education participants, practitioners, researchers and policy makers alike, as the four most significant aspects of further education curriculum. They are:

- **Educational Practices**
- **Learning Outcomes**
- **Recognition Outcomes**
- **Pathway Outcomes.**

This curriculum design model centres on subject and context. It only makes sense with a particular subject in mind, assuming that curriculum decisions in relation to this subject are made and negotiated in a local context. *Educational practices* refers to the activities, resources and modes; *learning outcomes* are subject-specific; *recognition outcomes* may be formal (an AQF qualification) or informal (a site certificate); *pathway outcomes* nominate a variety of life choices.

Because these four aspects are often considered singly, in an ad hoc way or even left to chance, this curriculum design model emphasises their inseparability and dynamic inter-dependence. Focussing both on what happens in the learning process and on what happens after, acknowledging the importance of integrating aspects that are often separated or missing or undervalued, it automatically locates learning more comprehensively. The following visual representation, Diagram 2, unfortunately static and two-dimensional, attempts to capture the desired energetic connections between the key principles, the further education subject, the educational practices and the curriculum outcomes.

Adult education does not take place in a vacuum: it contributes to social and national transformation one way or another ...

p.303 'Adult Education and Learning for Citizenship' in **Adults Learning**

*In the process of reflecting on eductional goals for a changing society, one must face the questions: what **kind of future society is likely to be shaped by a particular type of education, and what characteristics of the individual will contribute to a desirable society?***

p.44 **Education for the 21st Century: Asia-Pacific Perspectives**

... a curriculum is, always, a design for the future. In the knowledges, practices, values which it puts forward - and in their modes of transmission in pedagogies - it imagines a certain kind of human being, with particular characteristics.

p.viii **Writing the Future: English and the making of a culture of innovation**

*The very group of individuals **whose enthusiasm and commitment is most important to secure (VET teachers and trainers) has been marginalised ... Professional development activities have not focussed on improvements to teaching, which have been largely ignored in favour of 'management training over teacher - related activities.'***

pp.25 - 26 **VET policy and research: Emerging issues and changing relationships**

Model at a glance

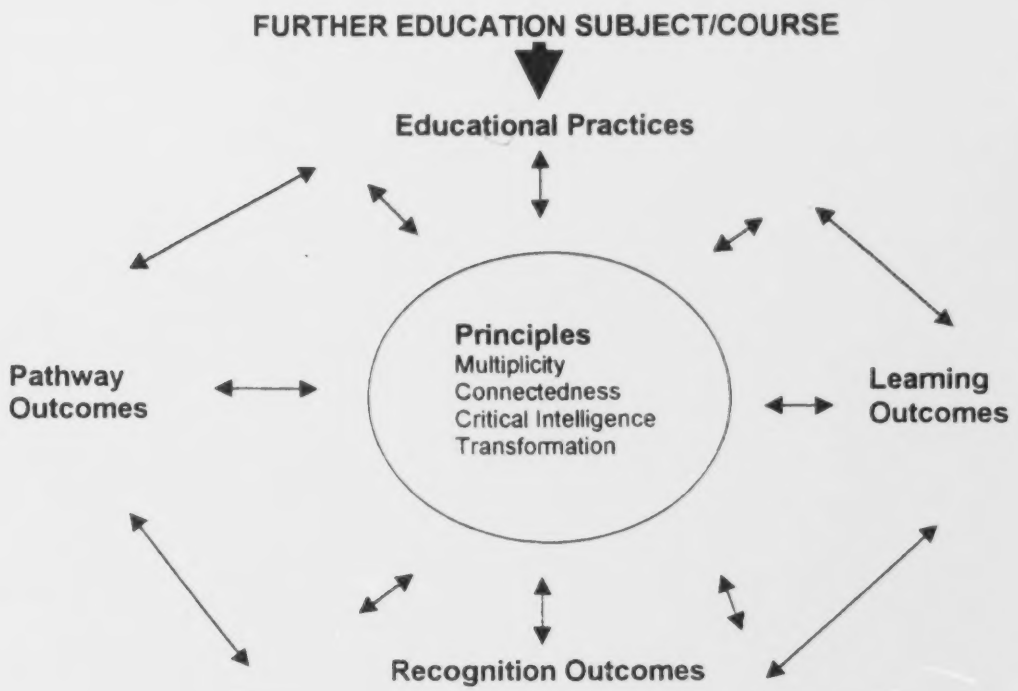

Diagram 2: Further Education Curriculum Design Model

Based on good practice

This further education curriculum framework is not a construct designed in isolation from current further education thinking and practice. Nor is it separate from contemporary vocational education and training thinking and practice.

On the contrary, this form grows out of the wealth of experience, innovation, experimentation and reflection that characterises the further education field. This model extends, expands, cross-fertilises and aligns the diversity of good practice to be found in Victoria today. Its inter-connectedness includes and integrates the whole cycle of curriculum planning and practice — learning processes and outcomes, recognition and pathway initiatives. As well, this framework takes into consideration ideas in the vocational education and training field, and in particular, ideas about quality and choice as described in **Assuring quality and choice in national training**, an ANTA publication outlining Australia's National Training Framework.

Believing the sum to be greater than the parts, this model of co-existence serves to strengthen each of the four often-segmented aspects of curriculum design. In addition, each aspect, like the model as a whole, is a living example of the key organising principles named earlier. Each embodies multiplicity, inter-connectedness, critical intelligence and transformation.

Negotiation

Negotiation is the lifeblood of this dynamic model. For example, activities emerging from the framework would not necessarily be in English. This further education curriculum framework has been consciously designed to encourage whatever language or languages are most suitable for the purpose and the circumstances.

Choices about language are part of a broader process of localised decision-making, of prioritising what is most appropriate and powerful for that particular individual or group, in that particular context and site. This framework strongly endorses and supports curriculum decisions being made in a democratic and decentralised way, relying on the experience and judgment of further education practitioners to make it work. In other words, it is effective negotiation practices that bring this design model to life.

Educational Practices	Learning Outcomes	Recognition Outcomes	Pathway Outcomes
A *multiplicity* of inclusive, *interconnected* practices that encourage creativity, *critical analysis* and *agency*, based on multidimensional pedagogies, embedded assessment and continuous evaluation.	A plaited subject-specific model that incorporates *multiple connected* outcomes, including language, literacy, numeracy, learning to learn and a greater capacity for *critical analysis, action and reflection*.	A *multiplicity* of ways of documenting and validating learning achievements and credit arrangements that most *intelligently connect* learning outcomes and readiness for future *participation*.	A wide-ranging interpretation of pathway planning that embodies *multiple* possibilities for future *action*, *evaluative* choices and coherent *connections*.

Table 1: Characteristics of Curriculum Aspects

Although this framework has been designed with contemporary further education programs and nomenclature in mind, its viability does not depend on them. Its principles and design model apply to whatever names or definitions or boundaries might evolve in the future. This framework is planned to endure as it is not tied to the fortunes of terms or categories or projects that might change or disappear.

It is proposed that this curriculum framework be used as one means of devolving responsibility to the local level through empowering educational providers/organisations to accredit further education courses. Such courses would need to fulfil the curriculum requirements related to educational practices, learning outcomes, recognition outcomes and pathway outcomes that constitute the further education curriculum framework. This framework would work in tandem with a parallel process for the registration of community providers as Registered Training Organisations (RTO's) thus eligible to self manage the accreditation of further education courses.

Details of Curriculum Design Model

The four curriculum design aspects — educational practices, learning outcomes, recognition outcomes and pathway outcomes — embody, collectively and individually, the four curriculum framework principles of multiplicity, connectedness, critical intelligence and transformation. A thumbnail definition of each curriculum aspect is described in Table 1 above: the embedded principles are highlighted in italics. Seen *as a whole*, the interdependent co-existence of the four aspects exemplifies diversity (multiplicity) and coherence (connectedness) with an emphasis on critical analysis (critical intelligence) and participation (transformation). This compact overview of the curriculum model also shows how *each individual curriculum aspect* also realises a fusion of the four key principles.

More detail is needed to describe and demonstrate how each of the four framework principles of multiplicity, connectedness, critical intelligence and transformation shapes the unfolding stages of curriculum planning. It is necessary to show how the characteristics of each of the four curriculum aspects — practices, learning, recognition and pathways — suggest particular curriculum processes which can be illustrated in particular curriculum instances. Details of the curriculum design model in Table 2 (on pages 16 and 17) depicts the characteristics, processes and instances associated with each curriculum aspect. The italicized words draw attention to the four key principles embedded with the four curriculum aspects. This print-bound table gives but a hint of the curriculum design in action.

Curriculum Design Aspect	Curriculum Characteristics	Curriculum Processes	Curriculum Instance A further education 'Introduction to Child Care' course (an access/preparatory course) in inner city Melbourne
Educational Practices	A *multiplicity* of inclusive, *interconnected* practices that encourage creativity, *critical analysis* and *agency*, based on multidimensional pedagogies, embedded assessment and continuous evaluation	**SUBJECT as focus for and embodiment of all practices**, including: - *Multidimensional and interconnected* activities that meet a wide variety of educational purposes by widening each participant's repertoire of physical, psychological, social, cultural, linguistic, conceptual and vocational abilities - A *multiplicity* of media, texts, modes, activities, perspectives, resources, technologies - Reflective practices that favour *critical analysis*, problem-based activities, interpretation exercises and *action plans*	This wide array of practices enacts a *multiplicity* of purposes that *connect* texts, activities, resources, assessment and evaluation with a strong focus on *critical analysis* and *reflective participation*: - Formal presentations - Workshop sessions - Field trips - Guest speakers - Multicultural perspectives - Students' life experiences - Storytelling - Art and craft activities - A text on regulations - Preparation and presentation of an activities program - Contribution to regular course reviews - Workplace placement
Learning Outcomes	A plaited subject-specific model that incorporates *multiple connected* outcomes, including language, literacy, numeracy, learning to learn and a greater capacity for *critical analysis, action and reflection*	**Subject-specific knowledge, understandings and capacities** that incorporate: - A *multiplicity* of perspectives on the subject, including how they connect to each other - *Allied* behaviours and skills applicable to a variety of personal, social, educational and vocational contexts - *Associated* language, literacy and numeracy capabilities - *Related* learning to learn and *critical* abilities - Diverse forms of *participation*	This *multiplicity* of *interconnected* intellectual and behavioural outcomes highlights the *relationship between critical analysis and action*: - Knowledge of legal guidelines for childcare services - Ability to plan and organise a range of multicultural activities for pre-school children in care - Proven ability to provide a safe and nurturing child care environment - Expanded repertoire of parenting knowledge and behaviours - Development of oral and printed storytelling crafts, in English and in mother tongue - Working knowledge of resource centres and relevant agencies for future reference - Recognised increase in self-confidence and ability to participate in public affairs - Consciousness of future learning needs

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Table 2: Details of Further Education Curriculum Design Model

Curriculum Design Aspect	Curriculum Characteristics	Curriculum Processes	**Curriculum Instance** A further education 'Introduction to Child Care' course (an access/preparatory course) in inner city Melbourne
Recognition Outcomes	A *multiplicity* of ways of documenting and validating learning achievements and credit arrangements that most *intelligently connect* learning outcomes and readiness for future *participation*	**Situational factors**, determine whether: - System-wide recognition of credential - Formal or informal cross-credit - RPL application/portfolio - Workplace or community recognition - Site or provider certificate - Skills passport - Other	These *multiple* ways of recognising learning achievements displays the emphasis placed on *connecting learning, evaluation of learning* and future social *participation*: - Community centre certificate detailing course topics - Report confirming work experience - Booklet with drawings and photos documenting the children's stories collected by the students - Sample 'recognition of prior learning' (RPL) application forms - All are regularly accepted as references and valid RPL
Pathway Outcomes	A wide-ranging interpretation of pathway planning that embodies *multiple* possibilities for future action, *evaluative* choices and coherent *connections*	**Situational factors** determine whether: - Further education to further education - Further education to vocational education - Further education to general education - Accredited to accredited - Accredited to non-accredited - Further education to paid or unpaid work - Further education to community group - Move within the site - Move beyond the site - Other	This *multiplicity* of possible *pathways* indicates the *inter-relationship* between breadth of choice, decisions based on careful *analysis* and meaningful future *participation*: - To other community centre classes - To general education or other access classes at other sites - To TAFE childcare courses - To TAFE healthcare courses - To employment in childcare and in community work - To English classes in a variety of settings - To committee work in community organisations - To mentor within own ethnic community

Table 2 (cont.): Details of Further Education Curriculum Design Model

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Notes on the Further Education Curriculum Design Model Depicted in Table 2

Educational Practices

These are living examples of multiplicity, inter-connectedness, critical intelligence and transformation that ***integrate***:

- Multidimensional, integrated pedagogies
- Embedded multidimensional, integrated assessment
- Multidimensional, integrated and continuous evaluation.

Educational practices cover all those aspects that enable the learning outcomes — the selection and placement processes, the pedagogical processes, the range of activities and resources and perspectives, the assessment processes (before/during/after) and the continuous evaluation of learning processes. In practice, it is impossible to separate these practices (evaluation, methodology and assessment, including recognition of prior learning (RPL)) from the desired learning outcomes. Each determines and needs the other; each reproduces the other.

In order to achieve 'quality' practices, a range of techniques and technologies may be involved — face-to-face interaction; the printed word; any of the wide array of telecommunications media (telephone, fax, computers e-mail, the Internet). This curriculum framework does not favour one methodology or process over another. Specific purposes and circumstances need to determine which exact methodology (or combination of methodologies) is preferable — classroom activities, group projects, individual assignments, distance mode, electronic communication and/or interaction. What is common to them all, in this curriculum framework, is the emphasis on diversity, coherence, critical stance and participation.

Special mention, however, needs to be made of the place of the new, convergent technologies with regard to learning. There is no doubt that these new technologies (videos; computers; software; electronic networks; specialist and general cyberspace educational communities) have the potential to redefine 'quality' and 'choice'. A compelling and powerful example of 'multiplicity', 'connectedness' and 'transformation' at work, is the extent to which they could expand the repertoire of learning choices - the subjects and courses available; the modes available; the times and places available. This extension of range is especially empowering for small communities.

Whilst the diversity of telecommunications options certainly extends the range of choice, in and of themselves they do not necessarily ensure 'quality'. This further education curriculum framework, in bringing its fourth organising concept 'critical intelligence' to bear, contributes this dimension. The achievement of learning outcomes then promises 'education' not merely 'information', clearly demonstrating the value added by ***embedding the educational goals and values*** of this framework in all processes, electronic ones included.

Assessment is understood in this framework to be the process for making judgments and validating achievements. The criteria, processes, materials and tasks must, in line with all national policies on this matter, be valid, reliable and fair. Those being assessed must know exactly what is going on and how to appeal against a perceived improper judgment. Quite deliberately, this framework does not specify detailed assessment procedures: such fine attention to detail can only be properly determined at each individual site. What it does specify, however, is that whatever the means chosen must be justified by the clearly spelt out ends. Assessment must exemplify the multi-stranded nature of the learning outcomes, mirroring their three-fold nature as described below.

The achievement of multidimensional, integrated evaluation, or continuous improvement, also takes many forms. Promising possibilities are developing in 'good practice' benchmarking.

Learning Outcomes

These are living examples of multiplicity, inter-connectedness, critical intelligence and transformation, focussed on a particular subject, that ***integrate*** the following capacities:

- **Subject-specific knowledge and capacities, that is,** a site-specific subject area, including accredited or non-accredited courses and modules.
- **General foundation education capacities, that is,** language, literacy, numeracy and generic competencies. Possibilities include using or adapting existing models (e.g. the Certificates in General Education for Adults, the National Reporting System, the Certificate in Spoken and Written English, Key Competencies), evolving models (e.g. Multiliteracies), locally designed models or future developments.
- **Learning to learn capacities, that is,** lifelong learning readiness, with an emphasis on critical analysis and a sense of personal agency.

The learning outcomes recognise the importance of spelling out the amalgamation of ingredients necessary for effective and rich learning. The outcomes weave together three often separate and unrelated threads so that each reinforces the other.

Subject in context

First of all, this model stresses the central place of subject and content in learning. The learning outcomes are designed to rotate around a specific subject area (such as 'caring for children' or 'creative writing' or 'introduction to computers') or content-based course (such as 'introduction to child care' or a women's access or a jobskills course). The precise subject knowledge and capacities (such as the first four outcomes named in the 'Introduction to Child Care' curriculum instance in Table 2) require negotiation at the local site. For some learners, existing courses (accredited or non-accredited) may be quite appropriate. For others, combinations or adaptations of existing courses may be preferable. For others, the exact knowledge and capacities will need to be tailor-made for the context.

Foundations/language and literacy

Second, the role of language, literacy and numeracy as enablers of learning and doing has been well documented. Effective communication is seen as a prerequisite to effective participation. This model foregrounds this connection, not assuming it is automatically acknowledged or included. Like the subject matter, these learning outcomes reflect the requirements of the particular context, as do those specified in the child care example. Existing language, literacy and numeracy models or frameworks (or parts of them) can be used or adapted. Otherwise, these language and literacy outcomes need to be custom-made.

Learning to learn

Third, the model highlights the enduring significance of 'learning to learn' as a marker of successful learning and readiness for the next stage. Many 'learning to learn' models exist. What they all share in common is the development of capacities to organise and monitor one's own learning and the development of explicit consciousness about one's strengths, weaknesses and preferences as a learner. These outcomes also need to be locally negotiated and articulated, as is once again evident in the child care example.

Recent research argues that the human mind is not, like a digital computer, a processor of general rules and decontextualised abstractions. Rather, human knowledge, when it is applicable to practice, is primarily situated in socio-cultural settings and heavily contextualised in specific knowledge domains and practices .... inextricably tied to the ability to recognise and act on patterns of data and experience .... humans are contextual and socio-cultural 'pattern recognisors' and actors .... such patterns underlie the ability to act flexibly and adaptably in context.

p.84 **'A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures' in Harvard Educational Review**

There are four kinds of capital - economic, cultural and social, and an overarching element, symbolic capital ...

p.327 'Genres of Power? Literacy education and the production of capital' in Literacy in Society

Confronted with accelerating change, individuals and communities need confidence, courage and creativity in order to find the right directions and solutions which will enable Australia to continue to be a fair, just and tolerant society.

p.5 National Policy Adult Community Education

Today, the expert is the one who sees and seeks the connections among related pieces of information, not the one who has the bare decontextualised facts.

p.11 Technological Literacy

What is unusual about the transcultural person is an abiding commitment to the essential similarities between people everywhere, while paradoxically maintaining an equally strong commitment to his/her own differences.

p.159 **'Culture in the Classroom' in The Craft of Teaching Adults**

As our understanding of the relationship between language, literacy, learning and action continues to become more sophisticated, so will more sophisticated models be developed. The same can be said of 'learning to learn' models. It was deemed inappropriate, undesirable and wasteful for this project to undertake the time-consuming, labour-intensive work of developing another detailed curriculm framework in these domains. It was considered wiser to create a design and procedure that could readily evaluate, absorb and/or adapt the latest best thinking and practice.

Three as one

This three-stranded model moves beyond restricted notions of 'learning outcomes' or 'competencies' that often deny a place to knowledge and understanding, to conceptual and linguistic development, to reflection and participation. It is a much richer definition, focussing on a description of those learning outcomes that will provide the best educational preparation for the next life choice. The outcomes, though introduced separately, are envisaged as an inseparable whole. Any 'outcomes statements' would mirror this inter-connectedness, this unity in diversity.

Recognition Outcomes

These are living examples of multiplicity, inter-connectedness, critical intelligence and transformation that ***incorporate*** a distillation, adaptation and customisation of policies, good practice and practical guides (both existing ones and future ones) on recognition arrangements.

As well as 'where to and what next?', this framework includes the recognition status of what has been learnt. It indicates 'who recognises what and for what purposes'. This aspect of further education, though less well developed than the older traditions concerned with educational practices, outcomes, and pathways, has been gaining ground in the field, especially since the introduction of accredited language and literacy courses. In this model, the emphasis is on diversity, appropriateness, critical evaluation and agency.

In this framework, formal 'recognition' means that the learner has achieved all or part of the outcomes of an accredited course. Many accredited courses will give the learner credit into further courses or be preparation to undertake further study. Since most accredited courses are nationally recognised, this gives learners portability of qualifications and guaranteed credit transfer where it has been formally established.

Formal recognition is documented through a qualification or statement of attainment for an accredited course. Qualification levels are described and defined by the Australian Qualifications Framework, which has levels from Certificate 1 through to Advanced Diploma. The qualification level forms part of the course title. Examples of accredited further education courses are:

- Certificate I in General Education for Adults
- Certificate II in English for Occupational Purposes (Health Professionals)
- Certificate III in Workplace Education
- Certificate IV in Spoken and Written English — Mixed Focus.

Statements of Attainment are used for partial completion of a course (a specific module from an AQF qualification that grants a Statement of Attainment) or for a short course (one which does not fully meet the criteria for one of the AQF qualifications).

If learners wish to access accredited vocational training as one of their goals, providers will need to ensure that their programs take into account the entry competencies for those programs. If learners need formal recognition for their studies, for example as a prerequisite for employment or further study, then providers will need to consider delivering appropriate accredited courses.

Two local projects offer useful information and advice on matters related to further education and credit transfer. They are the 1995 **Community Based Provider/TAFE Links** project report (including 'Process for Credit Transfer' guidelines) and the Credit Transfer project described in the June 1997 issue of **Multiple Choice**.

Less formally, 'recognition' can be taken to mean documented proof of learning achievement that could constitute part of an RPL portfolio or skills passport, both of which can be presented for employment and further study purposes and applications. Many educational sites (community centres and workplaces, for example) provide recognition in the form of certificates of participation, records of achievement and endorsed student portfolios or other productions.

Pathway Outcomes

These are living examples of multiplicity, inter-connectedness, critical intelligence and transformation that ***incorporate*** a distillation, adaptation and customisation of policies, good practice and practical guides and kits (both existing ones and future ones) on pathway planning.

Planted within the metaphor of pathways are suggestions of purpose, movement, choice, direction, connectedness, access, barriers, progress and destinations. As expressed so comprehensively in **Planning Pathways for women from ACE to VET** (p.14, draft copy):

A pathway can involve —

- *the linking of one type of course with another;*
- *the overcoming of institutional obstacles or barriers to pathways;*
- *a choice of direction, an orientation and willingness to venture;*
- *learning as a personal journey in search of meaning;*
- *progression to higher knowledge and*
- *a map that can be used to guide learners along a learning route.*

The notion of pathways promoted in this framework is an equally multifaceted and wide-ranging one. It is not a 'quick fix', an afterthought or a last-minute add-on. Rather, it is integral to the whole learning experience. The inclusion of pathways fastens outcomes and processes together, both shaping them and shaped by them. This model requires coherent and cogent negotiation and decision-making, with a strong emphasis on strengthening the agency of the learner.

It is worth noting that the report mentioned above concluded that *"pathway planning is facilitated where it is an integral part of community-based practice"* (p.60). There are therefore experiential as well as philosophical reasons for explicitly naming pathways as an essential ingredient in a further education curriculum framework.

Attention to pathways is not a new idea or unfamiliar practice in further education. The fostering of links and pathways has been practised and documented in the ACE sector for quite some time. The recently published **Forging Pathways — Good Practice in Community-based Adult Education** is a fine local, current example. The first part is a set of case studies of how five ACE providers used pathways to extend learning and employment opportunities for their communities. The second part, consisting of guidelines for planning pathways, includes considerations in planning pathways, ways to organise external and internal scans and a pathway action plan.

The important questions for educators at the moment are ethical ones. What kinds of values we might want to pursue.

p.14 'The Marginalised Speak Up ?' in **Speaking Back**

Democratic participation is, so to say, a matter of good citizenship, but it can be encouraged or stimulated by instruction and practices adapted to a media and information society. What is needed is to provide reference points and aids to interpretation, so as to strengthen the faculties of understanding and judgment.

p.35 'From social cohesion to democratic participation' in **Learning: The Treasure Within - Highlights**

Internationalisation will impose heavy demands on adult education in the future. This applies to linguistic skills and a deeper knowledge of the culture, socio-economic conditions, legislation, regulations, norms and mindsets of other nations.

p.17 **The Golden Riches in the Grass: Lifelong learning for all**

... the process of transition from what was essentially a reproductive model of knowledge transmission to the construction of more open, innovative and participatory ... learning systems ...

p.329 **Boundaries and Quality: ... in South Africa**

... discourse is more than a set of statements. It consists of the meanings and social relationships embodied in the statements, and of the values, assumptions and taken-for-granted knowledge that underlie the statements.

p.118 **Defining the Enemy: Adult Education in Social Action**

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Six Distinctive Features of Further Education Curriculum Design Model

- **A 'package deal'** that fuses together frequently isolated curriculum aspects - practices, outcomes, recognition and pathways - to create an integrated, rich learning experience.

- **A mix'n'match model** that allows an infinite number of curriculum combinations and permutations within each of the four aspects.

- An **open, inclusive and enduring model** that is designed to incorporate the latest further education thinking and good practice. Because the framework is not a fixed, monolithic structure nor tied to one single text, project or policy area, its capacity for inclusiveness promises a long shelf life.

- A **responsive and dynamic model** that reinforces the proven track record of further education co-ordinators and teachers to respond promptly and appropriately to their communities' desire for quality, choice and currency.

- A **'devolution of power' model** that affirms the central significance of teachers, learners and co-ordinators in localising and negotiating learning to achieve tailor-made, good quality learning outcomes.

- A model that incorporates **'lifelong learning'**, the capacity consistently mentioned by researchers, employers, government think tanks and teachers as most necessary in the world of today and of tomorrow.

As more and more people collect credits (rather like lottery tickets) which lead to qualifications that are widely considered to be totally unconnected to mind-expanding or life-transforming experiences - not to mention having little or no relationship to interesting, useful or well paid employment (if at all) - it would now seem a matter of real urgency to consider what all of this might signify.

p.144 'Really useful knowledge', **Words in Edgeways**

There is a conceptual inadequacy which haunts present policy and funding mechanisms in adult education and training. It is the insistence upon differentiating between educational programs on the grounds of their perceived or declared vocational orientation. It muddies thinking, distorts values and perpetuates a whole lot of unhelpful distinctions - between private gain and social benefit, between the market and the domestic spheres; between men's work and women's work; between short term interests and long term gains.

p.3 Beyond Cinderella: Towards a learning society, a report of the Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee

The ACFE sector, which is owned and managed in the local community, and has been responding to industry needs as being part of the community, may provide a model for how these needs can be identified and prioritised.

p.30 **VET policy and research: Emerging issues and changing relationships**

... the development of a training culture with small business appears to have its best chance of success in a networked, local environment. Again, this is typically a training approach most consistently found in ACE.

p.38 **VET policy and research: Emerging issues and changing relationships**

ENDNOTE

Quality and choice

This framework acknowledges current education and training policy initiatives at the local, state and national level. Noting and distilling the major policy directives of the ACFE Board, The State Training Board (STB) and Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), it seeks to identify common ground between the policies being developed by these three key bodies. What emerges most powerfully in recent documents produced by all three is the prominence given to the values of 'quality' and 'choice'. This framework, as a whole, as well as each of its constituent parts, has entwined these two strands.

The notion of 'quality' embedded in this framework is a multidimensional one. It is based on an understanding of learning that highlights the 'what next' and 'with what evidence' as much as the 'what' and 'how'. Given this perspective of learning, 'quality further education' requires that equal attention be paid to four significant, inter-related aspects (the ones named in the Curriculum Design Model) if the learner is to be assured the best value for time, effort and money. 'Quality' therefore means quality (multipurpose) practices, quality (rich) outcomes, quality (validated) recognition and quality (visible and accessible) pathways.

The concept of 'quality' embedded in this further education framework embraces developments within the VET sector. At the same time, given the complexity and scope of further education values, purposes and outcomes (personal, social, cultural, occupational and civic), it extends and combines those developments in new ways. It is a definition that grows out of ACFE culture, ACFE values and ACFE successes.

The same is true of 'choice'. The learning outcomes can be selected from a wide array of possibilities. The curriculum design model stresses learner and teacher choice of appropriate methods, texts, resources, modes and tasks. The inclusion of pathways increases choices for the future. The availability of recognition provides a sound foundation for future study, training, employment applications and other life choices.

Recognising that people come to class as multi-role individuals and learners, often simultaneously a parent and a worker and a student and a community volunteer and a performer or a player, this course doesn't artificially separate personal, social, vocational, academic and political goals. It deliberately encompasses all these purposes, knowing that people can be involved in sport for all these reasons.

Sports Psychology course, p.110 **Multiple images, Common threads**

Characterising her 'Small Business Development Course for Women' as 'a course for the 90's', Ninette is putting into practice ideas of current thinkers who see the role of the educator as future focussed, as knowingly imagining and constructing preferred personal, social and global futures.

Small Business course, p.46 **Multiple images, Common threads**

With all the talking and planning and decision making that goes on in the group, there are endless opportunities for group participants to strengthen both their cultural identity and their social skills, and to do this naturally and meaningfully. As social skills are restored people feel a new sense of power and a strong desire to pass on what they have learnt to others. They say that it is the knowledge and confidence that they get from this group that helps them to reconnect Kooris to each other, to their culture and to the wider society.

Koori Art course, p.58 **Multiple images, Common threads**

Certainly there is a high premium placed on individual effort but it is always supported, at key moments, by face-to face workshops where all the course participants come together. ...This course provides the best of both worlds ñ the dynamic exchange of ideas that comes with group learning and the control over time and place that comes with self-paced, home-based study.

Flexible Delivery Tourism course, p.98 **Multiple images, Common threads**

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Relevant policies

A range of local, state and national policies on education and training have contributed to the design of this framework. The most notable ones are:

- a focus on the future with regard to the requirements of Australian society in the 21st century;
- the ACFE Board's power to accredit and register providers;
- devolution of power and responsibility, alongside minimisation of government control, to the local context and site;
- national training reforms and in particular, National Training Packages;
- the review of accreditation and recognition structures and templates;
- development of quality assurance management systems criteria;
- the promotion of diversity and
- the prominence being given to citizenship and civics education.

With these in mind, it was considered imperative to design a model that:

- does not favour one curriculum aspect over another;
- formalises curriculum areas (pathways and recognition) where explicitness has often been absent;
- is not bound to bureaucratic procedures that might change shape or be abandoned;
- is not too tight nor too loose, not too hollow but not too congested and
- promises the continuity of valued further education philosophy, practices and outcomes whilst extending their domain to include pathways and recognition.

Widespread support

Nationally and internationally, the call for a robust definition of lifelong learning is justified on economic as well as social justice grounds. Bruce Chapman from the Australian National University's Centre for Economic Policy Research, admits the difficulty of quantifying social benefits. Nevertheless he goes on to say that:

it is still likely to be the case that for ... more informed public debate, more sophisticated voting behaviour and the additions to economic growth as a result of more informed workers dealing productively with random shocks ... the additional learning from PCE (post compulsory education) delivers some societal benefits (pp.1-2).

Support for the ideals represented by this framework is also exemplified in European worker education and labour market programs that promote broad general education. This is seen as the best way to ensure that workers will respond positively and productively to change, as the best preparation for undertaking retraining effectively and efficiently. Such initiatives assert that a rich concept of further education makes both economic and social good sense, creating a firm foundation for living in a world characterised by change and contradictions and complexity.

This potential for transformation, for transforming both individual lives and whole communities, is eloquently summarised in the powerful question posed on page 14 in the **Highlights** of the Delors report:

How could (we) *fail to highlight the ways in which educational policies can help to create a better world, by contributing to sustainable human development, mutual understanding and a renewal of practical democracy?*

APPENDIX

How did the conceptual framework evolve?

This conceptual framework for further education curriculum evolved over the period from late June 1997 to mid-November 1997. It was shaped by a number of influences:

- the original project aims;
- the project methodology;
- the current education and training policy climate;
- the critical issues that emerged from a wide-ranging literature search;
- the responses to a discussion paper arising out of this research;
- the outcomes of a series of workshops with relevant stakeholders;
- the results of consultations with individuals familiar with allied or related frameworks (e.g. CGEA, NRS and Key Competencies) and
- the good practice evident in recent local further education initiatives.

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- Peter Waterhouse, Workplace Learning Initiatives
- Eva Watson, Western Melbourne Institute of TAFE
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Isolated items of information do not constitute a corpus of knowledge until these items are sorted and fused to form coherent, inter-related entities ...If there is no limit to the growth of knowledge and applied knowledge, while the population is left without insight and a measure of influence, the result will be an inhuman, technocratic 'spectator' society.

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...'really useful knowledge' ... implies knowledge which connects the cultural with the intellectual and the practical, makes no crude distinction between what is vocational and non-vocational ...

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Notes